

Twelve Gods Brewery, LLC
167 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

Wilton Planning and Zoning Commission
Town Hall Annex
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

RE: Request for Zoning Change in favor of allowing Brewery as a Special Use in GB Districts.

Dear Commissioners:

We are the principles of Twelve Gods Brewery, LLC, a local fledgling brewery, and also business and property owners in Wilton. Attached you will find a letter sent to the Town of Wilton Board of Selectmen and also to the Planning and Zoning Commission. In this letter we make our case for Wilton to amend both a Town Ordinance and a Zoning Regulation to allow for the manufacture of alcohol in town; specifically the manufacture of beer in a brewery as defined Connecticut General Statute § 30-16(b) Manufacturer of Beer permit. We have, initially, attached limitations to both the size of the facility and volume of beer manufactured. This was done to quell any consternation the town or the commission might have regarding a facility which produces alcohol in town. As we move through this process we find that placing limitations upon the size and capacity of manufacture is unrealistic and in the future will severely inhibit the viability of the business. We will, for the purpose of this pre-application discussion, leave those limits in place and will work with the town to come up with a solution that is reasonable.

In our letter we ask the town to make two changes. 1) to the town ordinance Article I of Section 8: Sale of Alcoholic Liquor, to allow for the sale of liquor from a brewery and 2) to make the necessary change in the zoning regulations, specifically 29 - 6B - 3, to allow breweries as a special use permit under a new section, z.

Reasoning:

Twelve Gods is a fledgling brewery and under state law, we are still considered amateur or “home” brewers. We would like to begin the process of converting our operation to a full-fledged brewery and will require both Federal, State and Local approvals. One of the requirements to receive the Federal permits, so that we can also receive State permits, is that it is legal to operate as a brewery in the district the brewery is located. Wilton, being one of only 3 towns in the history of Connecticut that were “Dry” (did not allow either the sale or consumption or manufacture alcohol), has no precedent or regulations for such ventures. We are trying to correct that. We are aware that in 2021 there was a technical change with the addition of a definition in restaurants to allow for a Brewpub which is essentially a brewery that makes food or [more correctly] a restaurant that makes beer but is conferred all the privilege of a state Manufacture of Beef permit. In this case we are not interested in having food operations as part of our business. Our focus is producing high quality malted beverages.

Board of Selectmen:

We have presented our case to the Board of Selectmen and, we believe, they are supportive of the changes to the Town Ordinances and will (under advisement of the Town Attorney) recommend this change be put on the ballot for the special town meeting scheduled in January 2024. Their recommendation is, of course, pending support and cooperation of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Current Operations:

As October 2021 we are producing our brews in the basement of Orem’s Diner as amateur or “home” brewers [the business and property owner, Demetris Papanikolaou, is also a partner in the brewery]. Again, our interest is in acquiring state and federal

permits so that we can begin selling our products. The zoning change we are requesting will allow for that in GB districts in the Town of Wilton.

Future Considerations:

Our plans for the the future include expansion and relocation of the brewery to a more suitable site. This will inevitably require further changes to zoning regulations to accommodate the expansion and move. There are very few properties located in the GB district which meet all the requirements for a fully functional and operational brewery with a tap room and outside seating area that we envision and is also in-line with what would be expected in Wilton. Picnic tables in a parking lot just won't cut-it in our opinion. We are hopeful that we can work together to execute the vision we have and provide Wilton a place where people can meet and gather with friends and family and enjoy a nice cold pint of locally crafted brews.

We appreciate and thank you for your time and consideration.

The Twelve Gods Team,

Saki Panolis

Demetris Papanikolaou

Rafael Rodriguez

Town of Wilton Board of Selectmen &
Town of Wilton Planning and Zoning
Town Hall
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

We are writing to you as both passionate members of the local brewing community and as local property and business owners to request amendments to the existing town ordinances and zoning regulations regarding the sale and manufacture of alcohol. We kindly ask you to consider revising Wilton's alcohol ordinance to permit the sale of alcohol in breweries and the Zoning Regulations to allow for breweries as a special use permitted in the General Business District of Wilton.

As local property and business owners of both Orem's Diner and Twelve Gods Brewery, we have had the privilege of witnessing the growth and development of our community over the years. It is evident that Connecticut has become a hub for craft beer enthusiasts, attracting both locals and tourists who appreciate the unique flavors and cultural experience that breweries offer. Unfortunately, Wilton's current regulations do not allow breweries to operate and manufacture thereby hindering the Town's ability to participate in this unique industry.

Craft breweries have experienced tremendous growth and popularity in recent years, serving as both producers of high-quality beverages and vibrant gathering places for residents and visitors alike and we believe that our town has an opportunity to join the communities across the nation that have embraced the growth of craft breweries and the cultural, economic, and social benefits they bring. By modifying the existing alcohol ordinance and zoning regulations, we can foster an environment that supports entrepreneurship, encourages local creativity, and attracts tourists seeking unique experiences. Breweries, as centers of craftsmanship and innovation, can contribute to both the cultural and economic landscape of our town. They not only create unique and flavorful beers but also provide spaces for residents and visitors to gather, socialize, and appreciate the artistry of brewing.

We acknowledge the concerns raised regarding alcohol sales and “sit down bars,” as well as the significance of responsible consumption. However, it is important to recognize that breweries must adhere to strict state and federal regulations governing the production, labeling, and sale of alcoholic beverages. By complying with these regulations and implementing responsible serving practices, Twelve Gods can guarantee the safe and responsible enjoyment of our product. The proposed amendment(s) impose stringent limitations on the size and production capacity of the facilities, ensuring that they remain small-scale and have minimal impact. Additionally, the facility can be obligated to meet all local regulations and standards, with careful oversight to promote responsible consumption and prevent any potential negative consequences. This approach guarantees that the operations are well-managed and prioritize safety.

The proposed amendment(s) will allow for the establishment of craft beer production facilities within the town, with a maximum size of 9000 square feet and a production limit of 5000 BBL of beer per year. These production facilities will be permitted to conduct tours and tastings as outlined in the State of Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) 30-16 as amended by Public ACT 19-24 Sec. 5 (b), providing an opportunity for the public to learn about the beer-making process and to sample local brews.

In light of these considerations, we kindly request the Board of Selectmen and the Zoning Commission to review and amend the existing town ordinances and zoning regulations to allow for the manufacture and sale of beer in a brewery within our town as outlined in C.G.S. 30-16(b). By doing so, we can support local businesses, promote economic growth, and enhance the social fabric of our community.

Wilton’s current alcohol ordinance, outlined in Chapter 8 of the Town’s ordinances reads as follows:

ARTICLE I
Sale of Alcoholic Liquor

§ 8-1. Definitions.

For purposes of all sections of this article, the term "alcoholic liquor" shall be defined as set out in Section 30-1(3) of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended.

§ 8-2. Sale of liquor under golf country club permit.

The sale of alcoholic liquor under a golf country club permit is hereby allowed in the Town of Wilton as provided under the provisions of Chapter 545 of the General Statutes to include Sundays between the hours of 12:00 noon and 9:00 p.m.

§ 8-3. Sale of liquor under restaurant permits; penalties for offenses.

- A. *The Town shall allow the sale of alcoholic liquor in all restaurants operating under the liquor permits cited in C.G.S. § 30-91(a), as amended from time to time. The hours for such sales shall also be in accordance with C.G.S. § 30-91(a). [Added 4-3-2017]*
- B. *For purposes of this article, the term "sale of alcoholic liquor" shall be deemed to include the dispensing or consumption of alcoholic liquor or the presence of alcoholic liquor in glasses or other receptacles suitable to permit the consumption of alcoholic liquor.*
- C. *Any person violating the provisions of § 8-3 of this article shall be fined not more than \$99 for each offense.*

§ 8-4. Sale of liquor under package store permits.

The Town of Wilton shall allow the sale of alcoholic liquor under package store permits between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

§ 8-5. Applicability of general statutes.

All other provisions in the General Statutes prohibiting the sale of alcoholic liquor on specific days or setting the hours of sale of alcoholic liquor shall still apply.

We would like to propose amendment(s) for the ordinance to read as follows:

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- B. For purposes of this article, the term "sale of alcoholic liquor" shall be deemed to include the dispensing or consumption of alcoholic liquor or the presence of alcoholic liquor in glasses or other receptacles suitable to permit the consumption of alcoholic liquor.
- C. Any person violating the provisions of § 8-3 of this article shall be fined not more than \$99 for each offense.

§ 8-4. Sale of liquor under package store permits.

The Town of Wilton shall allow the sale of alcoholic liquor under package store permits between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

§ 8-5. Sale of liquor under brewery permits.

The Town of Wilton shall allow the sale of alcoholic liquor under brewery permits. *Brewery, as defined by Connecticut General Statute § 30-16(b) Manufacturer of Beer permit.* The hours for such sales shall also be in accordance with C.G.S. § 30-16 (b), as amended from time to time.

§ 8-6. Applicability of general statutes.

All other provisions in the General Statutes prohibiting the sale of alcoholic liquor on specific days or setting the hours of sale of alcoholic liquor shall still apply.

We would also like to propose an amendment to the Town of Wilton Zoning Regulations Chapter 29-6B-3 by adding a further special permit use **section z** as follows:

29-6B-3

- z.** *Brewery, as defined by Connecticut General Statute § 30-16(b)
Manufacturer of Beer permit; not to exceed a total area of 9000 square
feet for the production and storage facilities and limited to a production
of not more than 5000 BBL (barrels) per calendar year.*

With the success of breweries like Nod Hill in neighboring Ridgefield and others across the State, Wilton needs to move forward and provide not only a terrific town to live in with top schools and a wonderful bucolic feel but also other social amenities and attractions to engage our residents. Why drive to Ridgefield for the craft beer experience when we can have it right here? It is time for Wilton to join the rest of the state and become a part of this popular and growing industry and allow for the manufacture and sale of craft-brewed beverages in town.

We appreciate your consideration and your commitment to making Wilton a unique and desirable community to live, work and play in.

Very Truly Yours,

The Twelve Gods Brewery team

Athanasios Panolis, Demetris Papanikolaou, Rafael Rodriguez

